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**Wisconsin Receives Federal Approval to Improve Support for
Foster Care Kids Statewide**

MADISON.....Today, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) received federal approval of its waiver request to reinvest savings to assist kids in foster care statewide after they reunite with their families.

Under the federal waiver, the federal government agrees to allow Wisconsin to retain savings related to the safe reduction of foster care caseloads and reinvest the savings in the child welfare system throughout Wisconsin. Over the five-year project period, the Department expects to generate and reinvest approximately \$10 million of federal funding.

In Milwaukee County, children and families currently receive support during the initial twelve months after a child in out-of-home care reunites with his or her family. This support helps the family stay stable during this critical period and provide a safe and loving home for their child. The waiver will allow the Department to expand this best practice so that children in out-of-home care in other parts of the state have a similar support available to them when reunifying with their family.

"We have been successful in improving outcomes for families and children in Milwaukee. The number of children in out-of-home care in Milwaukee is now under 2000 and continues to drop," said Eloise Anderson, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. "The savings generated from these positive results allows us to replicate this practice in other counties."

Wisconsin was one of only a select number of states that received a federal waiver authorizing flexible use of federal funding. Wisconsin was the only state whose federal waiver project focuses exclusively on decreasing the number of children returning to foster care after reuniting with their families.

As part of the proposal, caseworkers will assist families in accessing all types of benefits and services they may need, including housing or childcare.

"The Department has been working with the First Lady, Mrs. Walker, in ending the cycle of harm families in the child welfare system experience," continued Secretary Anderson. "This ongoing support will increase the likelihood the family will stay together and reduce the likelihood the child will return to foster care. It is important to work with the family during the months following reunification to assist them with any unexpected challenges they may face."

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